

# Doing Business, Small & Medium Enterprise Support and Information Access

## Imagine Cup Vietnam 2015 | World Citizenship Competition



### BACKGROUND

Vietnam, a nation of 92 million people, aspires to be more fully integrated into the global economy and community and an industrialized nation by 2020. The country's efforts to open its economy to global trade and investment have contributed to high and sustainable rates of growth over the past two decades, boosting Vietnam into the ranks of lower middle-income countries and reducing the country's poverty level from nearly 60 percent in the 1990s to 17 percent in 2012.

If progress is to continue, Vietnam must support an enhanced business environment and make it easier for private sector and small to medium size enterprises to do business.

### KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- lack of legal, regulatory and capital market systems that meet global standards
- limited information sharing between government private sector
- low competitiveness

### APPLYING UNDER THIS THEME

Applications for this theme may focus on the creation of software products that:

- help businesses access information about laws and regulations
- improve business support services
- strengthen business to business partnerships and trade
- help businesses to provide feedback on tax and customs areas
- help Business Associations for seeking members' inputs on their requirements, challenges they face, suggestions on improving business environment
- Or other relevant topics

### THEME MENTOR:

Semi-finalists for this theme will be mentored by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff working for the Vietnam mission and partners. USAID supports increased trade and investment, enhanced private sector competition, public-private dialogue, an enabling environment for businesses and greater social and economic inclusion for all citizens.

# Disasters, Climate Change & Weather Theme

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## BACKGROUND

Vietnam is one of the world's most vulnerable countries to the impacts of climate change and storm events. The country's large population centers and key agricultural sectors are exposed to rising sea levels and increased storm risks in low-lying deltas and on its long coastline. Temperature variation and worsening droughts and floods threaten food security, livelihoods, and lives. Climate adaptation and disaster risk reduction measures will be key to Vietnam's economic growth. A USAID-funded assessment has shown that few Vietnamese enterprises have in place measures to prepare for and more rapidly recover from disasters, such as business continuity plans, which highlights the strong need to work with the private sector to better safeguard assets and secure livelihoods.

Because of its extreme vulnerability to climate change, the Government of Vietnam views climate change as one of its central development challenges. Vietnam's climate change National Target Plan focuses largely on adaptation, prioritizing water, agriculture, marine and coastal systems as most sensitive. In particular, the National Target Plan highlights the need for adaptation action in the Mekong and Red River Deltas.

## KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- need for climate change adaption and mitigation strategies
- increasing carbon emissions
- insufficient disaster preparedness

## APPLYING UNDER THIS THEME

Applications for this theme may focus on creation of software products that:

- Map vulnerable or affected areas
- Help locate missing persons
- Encourage disaster preparation for individuals or businesses
- Improve the accessibility of Vietnamese public safety/early warning information
- Coordinate responders and volunteers in a disaster
- Help obtain information on new technologies for energy efficiency and green building
- Help access information regarding building design with energy efficiency and disaster resilience (flooding, wind) information for urban areas
- Or other relevant topics

## THEME MENTOR:

Semi-finalists for this theme will be mentored by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff working for the Vietnam mission and partners. USAID supports government and social institutions in developing and implementing strategies in low emission development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and disaster risk reduction.

# Disability Theme

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### BACKGROUND

While Vietnam has experienced impressive economic growth over the past decade, a number of vulnerable groups, including persons with disabilities, have not reaped the benefits. Key challenges for persons with disabilities include the need for access to medical care, independence, and participation in economic and social life. Persons with disabilities are subject to high unemployment (over 56 percent) and earn less than non-disabled peers. Persons with disabilities often have limited access to services, partly due to barriers in place at schools, offices and public buildings.

Some persons with disabilities receive support including access to medical care and devices, and more recently, livelihoods and job skills training. Recent legal reforms have been developed to ensure dedicated services and disability rights are protected. Persons with disabilities organizations and parent associations are sources of empowerment and support and are actively involved in issues of importance to persons with disabilities. Increasing the independence of persons with disabilities, including access to education and work, creates a gateway to a fuller life.

### KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- limited access to services
- accessibility of school, offices and public buildings
- stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities
- barriers to comprehensive education and job skills for persons with disabilities
- lack of enforcement of disability policies meant to integrate and advance the needs of persons with disabilities

### APPLYING UNDER THIS THEME

Applications for this theme may focus on creation of software products that:

- Connect persons with disabilities to support services
- Help parents identify if their children may have a disability
- Assist in increasing accessibility and inclusion for persons with disabilities (e.g., using maps and location/timing of public transportation)
- Address stigma and discrimination against persons with disabilities
- Or other relevant topics

### THEME MENTOR:

Semi-finalists for this theme will be mentored by US. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff working for the Vietnam mission and partners. USAID supports building a case management system, strengthening medical, education and employment services for persons with disabilities, as well as enhancing selected public health disability prevention programs. USAID programs work with local governments and nongovernmental organizations particularly in Danang, Binh Dinh, Dong Nai, and other provinces.

# Higher Education Theme

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### BACKGROUND

The Vietnamese education system has achieved some impressive results, including a 98 percent literacy rate. However, challenges in the education system include limited training for teachers, inadequate instructional methods, and education management and administration. As Vietnam's economy grows, it will need a high quality workforce trained in general skills and areas of specialization relevant to current industry needs. Vietnam's higher education system presents opportunities for educational development assistance -- helping to support the next stage of economic growth, meeting labor market needs, fostering valuable research and generating a culture of innovation. The Government of Vietnam, donors and the private sector are working to reform the higher education system to produce trained, job-ready graduates that have the skills necessary to compete on an increasingly global market.

### KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- gap between education standards and workforce needs
- limited training for teachers and inadequate instructional methods
- need for increased access for underserved groups
- poor education management and administration

### APPLYING UNDER THIS THEME

Application for this theme should focus on the creation of software products that:

- Outreach to underserved populations, such as women, minority groups and low-income students
- Improve access to online learning tools and resources
- Enhance curriculum development and professor training
- Stimulate communication and experience-sharing across universities
- Or other relevant topics

### THEME MENTOR:

Semi-finalists for this theme will be mentored by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff working for the Vietnam mission and partners. USAID supports expanded access to quality higher education. To help boost the economy by increasing the number of job-ready graduates, USAID promotes innovation in higher engineering education, a vocational training alliance with academic and industry partners, and a program to improve social work.



# Environmental Protection Theme

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### BACKGROUND

The geographic diversity of Vietnam, together with its dense network of rivers and tropical monsoon climate, provides favorable conditions for a diverse and abundant plant and animal life. Vietnam is in fact considered as one of the most biodiversity rich countries in the world—a condition USAID recognized by categorizing Vietnam as a Tier I country for biodiversity in 2014 under its new policy—comprising only one percent of the earth's surface but being home to ten percent of all species. Ten percent of Vietnam's plant species are only found in Vietnam, and new species continue to be discovered. There are more than 275 species of mammals, 800 species of birds, 180 species of reptiles, 80 species of amphibians, 2,470 species of fish, and 5,500 species of insects.

The country has five Ramsar Wetland sites, two UNESCO Natural World Heritage Sites, eight UNESCO Biosphere Reserves, and four ASEAN Heritage Parks. With these efforts, Vietnam has placed each of its major forest ecosystem types under protection.

Vietnam must pay close attention to a growing number of domestic challenges that are linked to natural resource sustainability and environmental health. Terrestrial and marine biodiversity of Vietnam is under high pressure from habitat destruction and degradation, illegal poaching, and wildlife trafficking. Deforestation continues at rates not reflected in official statistics and illegal logging continues with large tracts of forests being lost. As industrial production has grown, Vietnam has experienced increased pollution and natural resource scarcities and degradation. These growing challenges are all the more important now in the face of climate change, and, in particular, the potential for rising sea levels and increased storm risks in low-lying deltas and on Vietnam's long coastline.

### KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- unsustainable use of natural resources
- need for implementation of green development practices
- need for protection of animal and plant species

### APPLYING UNDER THIS THEME

Applications for this theme should focus on the creation of software products that:

- Monitor and alert users to unsafe/unhealthy air and water quality levels
- Provide locations and directions to national parks, nature trails
- Protect endangered species and combat illegal trafficking
- Help conduct environmental monitoring and improved regulatory compliance
- Encourage protection of the environment
- Or other relevant topics

### THEME MENTOR:

Semi-finalists for this theme will be mentored by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff working for the Vietnam mission. USAID supports government and social institutions in developing and implementing strategies in low emission development, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and biodiversity conservation.

## Health Theme

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#### BACKGROUND

While the Vietnam has made remarkable strides in improving the health of the country's citizens over the past several decades, the country still faces the emergence of drug-resistant tuberculosis, ongoing outbreaks of highly pathogenic influenza in animals and humans, the continued threat of the HIV, fragile health systems, and human resource constraints. Additionally, limited health services for vulnerable groups, including ethnic minorities, have led to significant gaps in service delivery, resulting in lower health indicators and reduced economic opportunities.

#### KEY DEVELOPMENT CHALLENGES

- reaching key populations for HIV testing and services
- stigma and discrimination of key populations and people living with HIV
- insufficient tuberculosis detection in children
- curbing behaviors that lead to transmission of diseases from animals to humans
- need for increased surveillance and disease detection in animal populations
- weak health systems and human resource capacity

#### APPLYING UNDER THIS THEME

Application for this theme may focus on the creation of software products that:

- Enhance disease detection in animal populations and response for avian influenza and other pandemic threats
- Connect the target populations to testing and treatment services
- Encourage information about disease risks and treatment
- Address stigma and discrimination
- Share safety or risk information about non-communicable diseases, injuries
- Or other relevant topics

#### THEME MENTOR:

Semi-finalists for this theme will be mentored by U.S. Agency for International Development (USAID) staff working for the Vietnam mission. Under the U.S. President's Emergency Plan for AIDS Relief (PEPFAR), USAID activities to prevent HIV and treat and care for people living with the disease reach 90,000 people in Vietnam. USAID's Global Health Security-related assistance combating highly pathogenic avian influenza and other pandemic threats helped reduce the number of bird flu outbreaks in Vietnam.